

THE PLUMB LINE

BY JENNIFER LECLAIRE



Exposing Spiritual Abuse and Toxic Church Leadership

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Exposing Spiritual Abuse in Church Leadership | Healing from Ch...

In this season of exposure, I'm tackling spiritual abuse. Could you be a victim?

Victims of abusive church authority structures may not even realize what they are enduring until they escape its grip. Spiritual abuse is often subtle. Christian cult leaders don't always operate like Jim Jones. Controlling ministries tend to hide behind the guise of spiritual coverings. And far too many outsiders are not willing to even question the messages and practices of such churches. It takes lovers of truth with spiritual discernment to recognize the sometimes-subtle signs of abusive churches. And it takes courage to confront it.

What exactly is spiritual abuse? Jeff VanVonderen, co-author of the classic book *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse*, explains it this way: "Spiritual abuse occurs when someone in a position of spiritual authority ... misuses that authority placing themselves over God's people to control, coerce or manipulate them for seemingly godly purposes which are really their own."

Spiritual abuse is hardly a new phenomenon. You can find instances in the Bible of spiritual leaders exploiting people to build their kingdoms. In Jeremiah 8:11 (NIV) the Lord called out the abuse of prophets and priests, saying, "They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious."

Watch this video for a strong teaching on spiritual abuse, and a prayer to break free, in Jesus' name.

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